

for heresy, refused to allow him counsel, and finally sentenced him to be burned alive along with his objectionable book.

The sentence was indeed legal, but it was a wretched travesty both of the Protestant principle and of justice, and Calvin, who indeed sought to have it mitigated to execution by the sword, must bear a large share of the odium of the barbarous finale. The sympathy of the moderns is all with the brave Spaniard, who, though arrogant and abusive, maintained his faith to the last, in spite of his natural shrinking from so fearful a death. No Protestant martyr showed more heroism at the stake than this Trinitarian heretic, who would not belie his conscience with a false recantation (27th October 1553). It is the old story of the sacrifice of an advanced and emancipated spirit to the conventional bigotry of an age, too stupid or too prejudiced to understand it or make allowance for its genius. Only the few freethinkers of the period—mostly refugee Italians like Socinus, Ochino, Gentile, and Castellio— and a few Anabaptists like David Joris, lifted up their voices against this thick-headed, barbarous bigotry. Against such champions of freethought and its victims, all Calvin and his coadjutors, like Beza, had to say was to damn toleration in the name of God. "Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death, will, knowingly and willingly, incur their very guilt. This is not laid down on human authority; it is God that speaks and prescribes a perpetual rule for His Church/' As usual throughout the Middle Ages, God was made to play the patron of human folly, brutality, and bigotry. Calvin forgot that it was this very theory that had crucified the Christ whom he professed to vindicate, and that this Christ would have been the first to disown his presumption. He might make out a plausible case from the Old Testament, but it was sheer sophistry to attempt to prove, as he did in his " Defensio," the Great Teacher a persecutor, who had rebuked John and James for seeking to call down fire from heaven, and Peter for drawing his sword to smite his enemies. Calvin, like Luther, was inconsistent in this matter. In his early days he championed toleration. Under pressure of opposition he hardened into a bitter persecutor.

Calvin was answered by Castellio, who, with the collaboration of Curio, wrote, under the pseudonym of Basilius Mon-